

The President's Daily Brief

30 April 1969

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

1 May 1969

LATE NOTES FOR THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF OF
30 APRIL 1969

I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

MIDDLE EAST

Fighting between Lebanese troops and fedayeen is reported to have occurred yesterday in southern Lebanon near the Israeli border. The clashes are likely to have been with the Syrian-inspired fedayeen that have been flowing into Lebanon recently. (Press, 30 Apr)

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A military spokesman in Tel Aviv says five Israelis were killed by Egyptian gunfire yesterday at the southern end of the Suez Canal. (Reuters, 1 May)

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There is nothing significant to report on Vietnam, Europe, or Soviet Affairs.

II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

IRAQ - EAST GERMANY

Iraq yesterday became the first non-Communist state to accord full recognition to East Germany. Pankow, which has long centered its efforts to obtain diplomatic recognition in the Arab world and among other third world countries, probably will launch a major propaganda campaign and such pressure as it can exert on other states to get them to follow Baghdad's example. There presumably will be no great rush among other states to recognize East Germany, however, in part because West Germany would regard such action as an unfriendly act. Baghdad probably was not concerned about Bonn's reaction because Iraq does not have diplomatic or trade relations with West Germany. (Central Intelligence Bulletin, 1 May)

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BOLIVIA

President Siles' position seems increasingly precarious. The powerful Bolivian National Peasants Confederation, which is headed by armed forces commander Ovando, has demanded that Siles resign by 3:00 PM today. The stronghold of anti-Siles sentiment is Cochabamba, where Barrientos' body is being taken for burial tomorrow. As many as 30,000 anti-Siles peasants may be in Cochabamba by tomorrow.

The peasant federation's demand may be only an attempt to put additional pressure on Siles to bow to Ovando's wishes. It could, however, be the first step in a move to oust Siles and install a completely military government. (Central Intelligence Bulletin, 1 May)

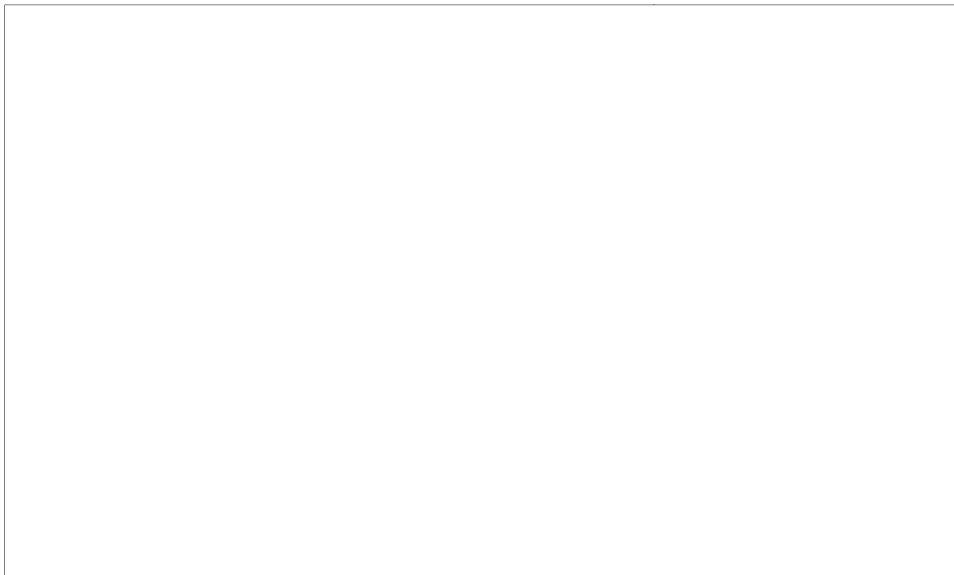
CAMBODIA

Sihanouk also used his press conference yesterday to denounce the North Vietnamese. He said that Cambodian troops are moving against Vietnamese Communists in the remote northeast. Sihanouk also called for an expansion of the Paris talks to include Cambodia, Laos, and other Southeast Asian nations threatened by American "imperialism" and Communist "expansionism." (FBIS, 30 Apr)

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I. MAJOR PROBLEMS

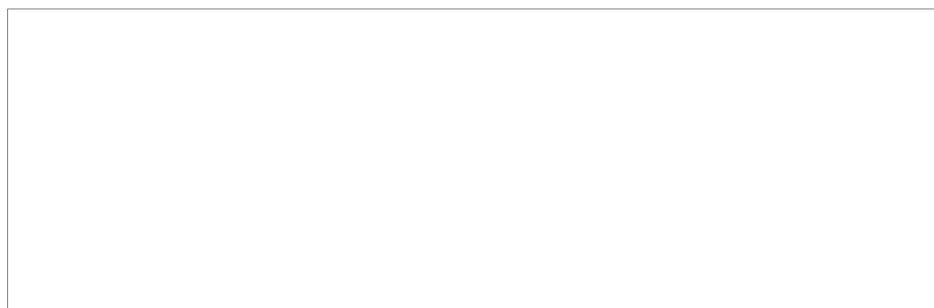
MIDDLE EAST



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An army officer, a terrorist, and three civilians died in a chance encounter between fedayeen and Jordanian military police in Amman yesterday. The situation is ripe for even more serious incidents.

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The Israelis are most unlikely to regard yesterday's clash in Amman as convincing evidence of Jordan's will or capacity to cool off the situation. With tensions rising, in fact, it becomes increasingly difficult for the Jordanians to do anything effective at all. If this state of affairs continues, some kind of Israeli military action is almost inevitable.

Mrs. Meir called in Ambassador Barbour this morning to warn him that the situation along the Jordan border was becoming "impossible." Husayn must do something "drastic," she said, to control both the terrorists and the Jordanian Army.

VIETNAM

Liberation Front spokesman Tran Buu Kiem at today's talks intimated that the Communists are now ready to engage in private substantive discussions with the US and GVN provided the allies agree to take the Communists' four and five points as the starting point of those discussions. Calling the four and five points "a realistic basis for a correct political settlement" of the Vietnam problem, Kiem affirmed that the Front is "ready to engage in discussions with the other parties so as to make the conference move forward."

Kiem was careful to describe the four and five points in moderate terms, hinting that the allies would be free to bring up whatever subjects they wish. He did, however, use the now hardened version of the Front's third point, which calls for the "unconditional" withdrawal of US forces. The original version made no mention of "unconditional."

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By leaving vague just which "parties" might be included in the discussions, Kiem allowed himself plenty of room for maneuver. The wording suggests, however, that for the present at least, the Communists will continue to insist that private substantive talks on the political future of South Vietnam will have to include the US as well as the GVN.

It is not clear why the Communists chose this moment to drop the public hint that they are ready for substantive talks with the GVN.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Communists have been concentrating their fire on the need for a "peace cabinet" to replace the present GVN leadership. It is possible that Hanoi now believes there is more to gain from engaging the US and the GVN in substantive discussions than there is from further delay. This would be in line with the Communists' conviction that the US and GVN will differ sharply over major issues as the talks progress. Thus their objective in this latest move may be to fish for just such differences where they can.

EUROPE

The dominant reaction among West Europeans over De Gaulle's departure is one of relief and renewed hope for unity. Most members of the European Commission recognize that the situation has dramatically and fundamentally changed, but that new obstacles are likely to appear rapidly to replace the one that has fallen away. Any changes will take place slowly: first because the new French government, once

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chosen, will take time to settle in, and secondly because Bonn, whose initiative would be essential to exploit the new situation, is already feeling "the paralyzing effect" of the elections to be held in September.

The Community will watch British policy during this interim period critically.

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Prime Minister Wilson and Italian President Saragat issued a joint declaration in London earlier this week calling for a united Europe

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SOVIET AFFAIRS

There is nothing significant to report.

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II. OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

BOLIVIA

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CAMBODIA

Sihanouk apparently is having second thoughts about how fast he should move toward a rapprochement with the US. He told a press conference in Phnom Penh today that Cambodia rejects the recent US border declaration. He said that American newspaper stories describing the general nature of the border declaration indicated Washington had "reservations" which undermined the declaration's utility to Cambodia.

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The account of the press conference is fragmentary, and it is still too early to tell how serious Sihanouk is about the "rejection." Throwing up last-minute hurdles to a course he has already set is characteristic of Sihanouk's political and negotiating style. In doing so, he may hope to extract some clarification of the US position which he can use to advantage with his neighbors and his domestic critics. At a minimum, a show of obduracy presumably would enable Sihanouk to demonstrate to Cambodian leftists, as well as the Vietnamese Communists, that he is still his own man.

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